

CHIEF WALKER

Probably the most noted chief among the Indians was Chief Walker who was the acknowledged chief of the Utes, yet feared among the different tribes of Indians as well as among the white settlers. History records his birth about the year 1815 and his place of birth on the banks of Spanish Fork River in Utah County where his tribe was camped. The name given him has an Indian meaning of "Brass." Gottfredson tells that when Walker was about twenty-five years old he had a vision:

"He died and his spirit went to heaven. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne dressed in white. The Lord told him he could not stay, but had to return. He desired to stay but the Lord again told him he could not stay, that there would come to him a race of white people that would be his friends and he must treat them kindly."

John C. Fremont records in his journal dated May 20, 1844:

"We met a band of Utah Indians headed by a chief who had obtained the American name of Walker, by which name he is quoted and is well known. They were all mounted, armed with rifles, and used their rifles well. The chief carried a fusee which he had in addition to his rifle. They were journeying slowly toward the Spanish Trail to levy their usual tribute upon the California Caravan. They were robbers of a higher order than those of the desert and conducted their depredations with form, under the color of trade and toll for passing through their country. Instead of attacking and killing they affected to purchase, taking the horses they liked and giving something nominal in return."

We next read of Chief Walker going to California in about 1847, taking with him a group of Piede prisoners. He had frightened the Pieves into giving him their children. These he took to California to trade for horses. He made a trade, started for home and then called a council. The braves returned and stole many more animals. The Spaniards pursued him and recovered some of their horses. They offered a large reward for those with which Walker escaped.

Early in the history of Salt Lake City, Chief Walker invited the pioneers to come to Sanpete County to build permanent white settlements, and for the first few years seemed to be their friend.

In the early summer of 1853 Walker and his tribes were camped near Springville, and all was apparently peaceful. One of the braves, however, became angry at his wife for having made a poor exchange for three trout which she had traded for three pints of flour. He began kicking and

beating the squaw and one of the white men interfered. In the scuffle the Indian secured his gun and the white man took the gun away from him. The Indian received a hard blow on the head with the barrel of the gun and a fight ensued in which several Indians were injured. The Indians became excited, and the white settlers took steps to protect themselves. The next day Walker and his band departed and as they passed through Payson, killed Alexander Keil. Here they made known their determination to exterminate the whites. Then followed the Walker War of which we have heard so much, Walker leading other minor chiefs in battles and raids against the white people. President Young continually advised the people to let Walker and his band alone.

"How many times have I been asked in the past week what I intend to do with Walker. I say, 'Let him alone, severely. I have not made war on the Indians, nor am I calculating to do it. My policy is to give them presents and be kind to them. Instead of being Walker's enemy, I have sent him a great pile of tobacco to smoke when he is lonely in the mountains. He is now at war with the only friends he has upon the earth and I want him to have some tobacco to smoke.'" July 31, 1853.

The hunting ground of Walker when he was not on the war path was between Nephi and the Sevier. It was there that President Young went to make a treaty of peace with this warrior and his followers. About fifteen chiefs were present among them Kanosh, Amon, Squash Head, Gros-pine, and Peteetneet. As President Young entered his tepee the chief did not rise, but put out his hand. He had said that Brigham Young was a great chief, but he, Walker, was also a great chief. Dimick Huntington acted as interpreter. Five minutes silence passed after the hand-shaking, at which time an old chief, whose body showed many scars of wars, arose and said:

"I am for war. I never will lay down my rifle or tomahawk. Americats have no truth. Americats kill Indians plenty. Americats see Indian woman—he shoot her like deer. Americats no meet Indian to fight. He have no mercy. One year gone. Mormons say they no kill no more Indians. Mormons no tell truth. Plenty Utes gone to Great Spirit. Mormons kill them. No friend to Americats no more."

Then the chief of the Sanpete Indians arose and told how his son had been killed and the same bullet from the rifle of an American had killed his wife who had gone in search of the son. He then added:

"Old Sanpete no can fight more, his hands tremble, his eyes are dim, the murders of his wife, and brave Wa-yo-sha are still living. Sanpete no make peace with Americats."

Walker refused to talk, saying he would confer that night with the Great Spirit and talk on the morrow with the governor. Then Governor Young passed the pipe of peace. Walker gave one or two puffs and passed it to the Governor, and then passed it around to all the party. The Mormon party had brought about sixteen head of cattle, blankets, and other articles to give to the Indians. Governor Young ordered an ox to be killed and a feast was prepared for the redmen. Next morning the group reassembled

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and the peace party continued. Walker was attired in a buckskin shirt and a blue blanket. He looked careworn and tired. He told the white men that they had not been fair to the Indians, that they had killed Indians while he was away. He told them he had not killed Gunnison and his party but was falsely accused. He said:

"Walker heart very sore. Mercats kill Paravain Chief, and Paravain women, Paravain young men watch for mercats and kill them, because Great Spirit say, 'mercats kill Indian'; Indian kill mercats. Walker no want to fight more. Walker talk with Great Spirit. Great Spirit say, 'Make peace.' Walker love Mormon Chief. He is a good man."

And so the calumet of peace was smoked and Walker promised peace and friendship with the Mormons. He accompanied the President's party on a trip to the south, taking with him many chiefs and braves. This treaty was made in the early summer of 1854 and it practically ended the Walker War. On January 29, 1855, Walker, the Indian Chief, passed away at Meadow Creek in Millard. History records that his final message to the braves of his tribe was to live in peace with the whites. He was buried in a cliff of rocks which was walled in. Seven head of horses and two Piede prisoners were killed and with one live Piede boy were placed in the grave. Walker was succeeded by his brother, Arapene. 73

Chief Walker and his brother Arapene

"Mr. Madsen, were all of the Utah Indian chiefs friendly to the pioneer settlers?" Tom Bennett asked.

"No, Tom, they weren't. Don't you recall that we have already talked about Chief Walker, who was hostile to the pioneers? However, both Chief Walker and his brother Arapene were friendly part of the time," the teacher replied.

"Linda will give us a report on these two Indian chiefs."

Linda came forward and began, "Chief Walker was born in about the year 1815, while the tribe of Utes to which he belonged was camped on the banks of the Spanish Fork River in Utah County. He became one of the most noted among the Utah Indian chiefs.

"He was feared among the various tribes of natives, and the whites were not able to trust him. In 1853-1854, he led the Indians in a war against the Utah pioneers. It is known as the 'Walker War.' This Indian chief died the following year at Meadow, Utah.

"Arapene became chief when Walker died. He was cruel and passionate, and an enemy of the whites most of his life. Two years after the death of Walker, however, Chief Arapene changed his attitude toward the settlers of Utah. He became friendly. The Ute chief told the Mormon authorities at Manti that he had seen Chief Walker in a vision and that Walker had told him not to fight the Mormons. And so Chief Arapene remained peaceable with the pioneers until his death on December 4, 1860," Linda concluded. *Hunter p193*



Photo — courtesy Utah State Historical Society
Walker and Arapene, Ute Indian chiefs.

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Photo — courtesy Utah State Historical Society
Walker and Arapene, Ute Indian chiefs, 1874

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